

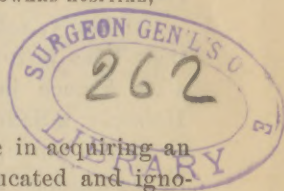
Turnbull (L.)

[Extracted from the Transactions of the Medical Society of the State of Pennsylvania.]

ON DEAF-MUTISM AND THE METHOD OF EDUCATING THE DEAF AND DUMB.

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ABSOLUTE deafness is far more of a hindrance in acquiring an education than blindness. The lot of the uneducated and ignorant deaf-mute is sad indeed; cut off from his fellow-men, with nothing but his animal passions and appetites, he is almost allied to the lower order of the brute creation. It is not to be wondered at, that during the early times, even among the so-called civilized and refined nations of Egypt, Greece, and in the great city of Rome, the condition of this class was truly deplorable. The old idea that speech was essential to reason, prevented attempts at their instruction, and they were not permitted to become members of any religious denomination. Even when they committed outrages against law and order, or after the commission of the crime of murder, they were not allowed to act as witnesses in their own defence.

As early as the fifteenth century, some faint effort was made to teach these unfortunates by a celebrated Benedictine monk,¹ who, it is stated, taught two deaf-mutes, sons of a Castilian nobleman, this, no doubt, at an immense cost of time and money. But it was to the sixteenth century that the great honor is due of being the year of jubilee to the deaf and dumb. And to the Abbé de L'Epée this great gift was given to teach deaf-mutes, by a symbolic language, so that they might know good from evil, and give to them aspirations after true knowledge, fitting them for a happy home here and a better world above. In this, the good abbé showed true Christian genius, devoting his whole life to giving and teaching

¹ Teaching articulation to deaf-mutes was first practised by Pedro Ponce de Leon, who died in 1584, and was first described by Juan Pabbo Bonet, in a dissertation published in 1620; then by John Wallis, in an appendix to his English Grammar, entitled "Tractatus Grammatico-physicus de Loquela;" and shortly after by Joliana Conrad Amman, in his "Suidus Soqueus," Amsterdam, 1692, and "Dissertatis de Loquela," Amsterdam, 1700.

them a language so that they could communicate with each other and with those they loved.

Another devoted man, the Abbé Sicard, took up the clue already given, and adopted the sign language for their instruction, and enlarged and improved it, reducing it to a system. The lives of two such devoted Christian men aroused public attention to the wants of deaf-mutes, and slowly but surely vanquished the prejudices that had existed against them even amongst professing Christians.

Gradually, schools were founded, and capable teachers spent their lives in instructing the deaf-mutes. Germany was not long after France in this philanthropic labor, for in 1760 Samuel Heinicke, a Saxon by birth, developed the "Artificial Method" now termed German, in contra-distinction to what was already known, to the honor of France, as the "French System," or finger alphabet and artificial signs and gestures. The principal aim of Heinicke was to cultivate whatever remained of speech by developing all its power, which exists in all (save a very few). The training of the eye to watch the motion of the lips requires the cultivation of all the powers of observation and imitation. In the early stage of this system artificial signs are absolutely necessary, but when these have been acquired they are to be merely used as a ladder to reach the higher region, where the finger alphabet and other artificial signs are excluded.

There ought to be a commissioner in every State to examine and classify the deaf and dumb, where all who are found to possess any degree of hearing or any remnant of speech (having lost hearing after learning to talk), or any who manifest a marked facility in vocal utterances, should be assigned to the articulating schools, while all others should be placed in the older establishments, where the language of signs is made the basis of instruction.

In a recent convention of Teachers of Visible Speech, to which the writer was invited, an interesting address was made by Mr. Wm. Martin Chamberlain, of Marblehead (a semi-mute), which shows the advantages of lip-reading and articulation. We can only give an abstract. He addressed the audience by word of mouth, and although his speech was somewhat defective, he was perfectly understood by all present. He stated that he lost his hearing entirely at five years of age, and would, as a natural sequence, have lost his speech also, had it not been his good fortune to have parents who appreciated its value, and used persistent efforts to have him make use of his vocal organs. He was educated at Hartford, where he entered as a pupil about the time when articulation was beginning to attract atten-

tion in America, and his ability to articulate induced his teachers to encourage him to recite his lessons orally instead of by signs. He stood before the convention without having heard a sound for thirty-five years, a living example of what can be done for a semi-mute by mere persistent effort on the part of friends, without any special instruction.

In an admirable letter from B. St. John Ackers, of England, in the American Annals of the Deaf and Dumb, April, 1874, he gives his conclusions, after examining the systems all over the world, in the interest of a deaf and dumb daughter. "*Our conclusions are in favor of the 'German System' for all who have once heard, for most of the semi-deaf, and a large majority of the toto congenital.* For the remainder, I cannot imagine any system more appropriate than the 'French,' only recording our opinion in favor of fewer signs, and increased use of dactylogy, and writing in the more advanced pupils." What struck him most was the contrast in the French and German systems in the love of home. Those taught under the "French system" care comparatively little for the "holidays" for home and relations. Why? Because the institution is their home, the principal, matron, and teachers, their parents and relations. "Let them be taught by the 'German System,' and this will enable them to think in the written idiom of the language of their country; will enable them to hold conversation with hearing persons, to understand much that is spoken to them, and will make them figuratively less deaf and truly less dumb; indeed not dumb at all."

It will be seen by the above quotation that he is of the same opinion as we are,¹ as lookers on, and not personally affected, giving an impartial opinion of what we consider the best method of instructing the deaf-mute. We do not find fault with what has been done, but rather rejoice that thousands of deaf-mutes have received the advantage of an education, and that there is also a national college at Washington where more advanced studies can be pursued, and young deaf-mutes are graduated with a standing for scholarship not inferior to that achieved by the graduates of other colleges. This college bears to other institutions for the deaf and dumb the same relation that colleges for hearing and speaking persons bear to primary schools and academies. The charge for board and tuition in college is only one hundred and fifty dollars for the academic year. Congress, however, makes provision for the free admission of residents of the District of Columbia who have not the means of supporting themselves, and for those whose fathers are in the military or naval service of the United States. In the

¹ Turnbull on Diseases of the Ear, chap. xix., p. 437.

Columbia Institution, which is a branch of this college, there is a Primary Department and also an instructor in articulation. Until recently the plan adopted in England was the French system, but now a change has taken place, and schools employing the so-called German system are to be found in London, one at 12 Fitzroy Square, and the other at old Kent Road. The first of these Institutions is termed the "Association for the oral instruction of the deaf and dumb." This system is now taught by Mr. Van Praugh, assisted by three ladies; it was founded in 1872 with four pupils; now, 1874, thirty-six are in attendance, and it is not a charity but a pay school. The second is a true charity, and was founded in 1792, for the support and education of the deaf and dumb children of the poor. According to Fry's London Charities the year's receipts last reported were £10,040, in round numbers \$50,200; the number of persons benefited last year, 1872, was two hundred and eighty-eight. It has also a branch at Margate sea-shore incorporated in 1862. This old and deserving metropolitan charity (the first of its kind in Great Britain) has up to the present time (1873) received under fostering protection 3900 deaf and dumb children from all parts of the United Kingdom. With very few exceptions these poor children come of indigent parentage; they have, therefore, been boarded, clothed, and specially educated for an average period of five years, each child, at the sole cost of this charity. Moreover, when their educational term has expired, the arm of assistance has been still further extended to them; and of 1360 former inmates who have been taught, and acquired a knowledge of various useful occupations, 324 deaf and dumb children are now (1873) under instruction at the town and sea-side establishment. About 260 former pupils are now serving terms of apprenticeship, the premiums (which are required in England) for which have been found by the committee. There is also a Jewish Deaf and Dumb Home, founded in 1867, at 44 Burton Crescent, W. C., to support and train deaf-mute Jewish children of both sexes to speak and to read from the lips of others, also to give general instruction to other deaf-mute children. Miss Hull has also a school in London, where the deaf and dumb children are taught by Mr. Bell's method of visible speech.¹

"Visible speech² does not prevent the employment of any means that are or have been used by others. Imitation and mechanical

¹ See the writer's account in *Med. and Surg. Reporter*, 1872.

² Extract from a letter to the writer, by Miss Fuller, the Principal of the School for Instruction in Articulation of the Deaf and Dumb, in Boston, June 9th, 1874.

aids are used whenever the pupil can be assisted by them; but when these fail, visible speech comes in to the assistance of the pupil.

"This system gives the pupil a knowledge of the concealed parts of the mouth, and of the movements of such parts, so that he is enabled to gain conscious control over them.

"The writing of any sounds that the pupils may utter, serves to interest them in the practice of elements and combinations, which gives them great power over their organs of speech, and obviates the necessity of telling them that a sound is wrong, if it is not the one the teacher wishes to obtain.

"It is our practice to write all sounds in the visible speech symbols, but practise most those that are essential in English speech. The symbolizing of odd sounds also leads the pupils to think about and study the parts of the mouth that produce them.

"I inclose to you some lines upon 'Visible Speech,' which were written by one of our pupils, a young lady who lost her hearing entirely at the age of eight years.

" VISIBLE SPEECH.

The ear has caught the forms of sound
 Upon the walls of speech;
 But all in vain till now, the eye
 Has sought their clue to reach.
 Now, with a mirror newly hung,
 Those walls of speech are graced;
 And in that mirror every sound
 Can find its image traced.

The blended tones which give to thought
 Its outward voice and sign,
 Revealed alike to ear and eye,
 With clearest lustre shine.
 This to the child of silence brings
 A gift unknown before;
 Unlocks the long-closed gates of speech,
 Opes wider learning's door.

The thought of speech, to him denied,
 Has often filled his heart;
 And, like a sword of ice, has sent
 Its chill through every part.
 Before him now the forms of sound
 In true reflection lie;
 For, though mist shrouds his ear, it sheds
 No dimness o'er his eye.

This gift, like sunlight, shall reveal
 What shadows else had marred ;
 To him whose skill has bade it shine,
 'Twill prove its own reward.
 In power and clearness may it grow,
 Till greater still is found
 The power it wields, the light it sheds
 Upon the world of sound.

APRIL, 1874.

A. C. J."

We must not forget, in doing credit to those who have done so much for the deaf and dumb, the name of Rev. Thomas H. Gallaudet, D.D., whose last resting place at Hartford we visited with feelings of admiration for his distinguished scholarship, and for his true Christian charity and patience. He taught the interesting daughter of Dr. Coggsell, of Hartford, who was deaf, dumb, and blind, and ultimately founded the American Asylum at Hartford. This truly good and great man proceeded to Europe in 1807, and became the pupil of the Abbé Sicard ; after remaining for some time he returned to the United States accompanied by M. Clerc, one of the favorite pupils of Sicard, who organized the Pennsylvania Institution for the Deaf and Dumb at Philadelphia, and subsequently returned to Hartford, there remaining until his death.

In their labors these two good men were united, and also in their renown, as each received for their valuable services from the directors, a silver pitcher and salver. In death they were not divided, their tombs standing side by side in the ground of the asylum, visited by loving and devoted pupils from all parts of this broad land. Both Rev. Dr. Gallaudet, and his son, Dr. Edward M. Gallaudet, the President of the Deaf-Mute College at Washington, have been warm friends of the sign language, and we availed ourselves in our work, of the report of his first visit to Europe in October, 1867. We again give his conclusions, after another visit in 1872: "While he would by no means claim that the system in general use throughout the United States is free from defects in its practical workings, he is convinced that the principle on which it rests is sound, and that greater benefits can be secured to the mass of deaf-mutes through its agency, than by any system which undertakes to make articulation its basis ; assuming to teach *all deaf-mutes* to speak, and discarding the language of signs."

In the seven years since that visit, a great change has taken place in the various deaf and dumb institutions in the United States, and not only are these several institutions solely devoted

to articulation, but all of the principal ones have teachers in articulation.

I trust that my object will be accomplished : First, in interesting physicians in preventing deaf-mutism, by careful and conscientious treatment of the diseases which cause it, namely, scarlet fever, cerebro-spinal meningitis, obstructed Eustachian tubes, measles, and syphilis. Secondly, in inducing a certain amount of study of the two main systems of instruction of which the writer has endeavored to give an impartial account, so that the physician can recommend to his patient, relatives, or friends the proper mode of instruction ; also to see that no improperly treated case of diphtheria or tonsillitis is allowed to be the cause of the deafness followed by dumbness. It is also surprising how often Eustachian tubes, obstructed from cold, are a cause of extreme deafness, and how long this may exist, and yet with persevering effort the child may ultimately recover its hearing, and with it speech if it has ever been able to talk. Numerous cases of this form of disease have come under the writer's notice. What is to be done, is the persevering use of astringents applied to the nasal cavity, fauces, enlarged tonsils, and swollen mucous membrane, with the use of tonics of iron, etc. Another important agency is the use of Politzer's air douche, to keep the tubes free from mucus.

No one can know the distress of having a child a deaf-mute, until one of his own household is afflicted in this way, as is graphically depicted in the following quotation : "The last of my family, father, mother, and near relations gone. After many years of married life, a child was born, a daughter. What my feelings of joy it is not difficult to imagine ; but alas ! all was soon changed. At three months old a fever came, and our hope, our darling, after lingering between life and death, was spared, but not the same. No, in time we found her hearing was gone. Oh ! the agony of mind we suffered, words can scarcely depict. She had the benefit of the best medical and surgical skill ; but alas, both were powerless."¹

¹ American Annals of the Deaf and Dumb, April, 1874.

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